

THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Allama Mohammad Iqbal

PREFACE¹

Allama Iqbal delivered a lecture on "The Muslim Community" in English at Stretchy Hall, Aligarh in 1910. Maulana Zafar Ali Khan translated it into Urdu as "Millat-e-Baiza per Ek Imrani Nazar", which is included in the three prose collections of Iqbal and has been also published in booklet form umpteen times. This lecture was never published in full; however certain parts thereof was recorded in the Census Report (1911), which was first reproduced by Syed Abdul Wahid Moini in his collection "Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal" (Lahore, 1953). Later Lateef Ahmad Sherwani included the same parts in the third edition of his collection, "Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal" (Lahore, 1977). Ahmed Nawaz Malik also got the same parts of the lecture published, with reference to the Census Report, in the Special Issue of *Funoon* on Iqbal in 1977, as new discovery on Iqbal.

Since the original lecture in English could nowhere be published, some persons amphibologised about the headline of the lecture. Syed Abdul Wahid Moini writes: "The lecture Allama delivered on "Islam

¹ This introduction of the lecture was in Urdu language. It is translated to English by Mr. Sikandar Azam, Editor RADIANCE Views Weekly New Delhi (MMIP)

as a Social and Political Ideal" at Aligarh in 1910 was translated by a great Aalim and litterateur Maulana Zafar Ali Khan." Mr. Moin has mentioned this very headline of the Aligarh lecture in his English collection as well. The fact remains that the headline of the Aligarh lecture was "The Muslim Community". Further, Allama Iqbal never wrote any article on "Islam as a Social and Political Ideal". However, one of his articles was published in the *Hindustan Review* (July to December 1909) with the headline "Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal" and perhaps Mr. Moini might have amphibologised with this headline.

The original lecture in English was considered extinct so much so that Allama Iqbal too had no copy of it. In an interview to a correspondent, he said:

"I am sorry I have no copy of the lecture in question in the original English or in the Urdu translation which was made by Maulana Zafar Ali Khan."

Iqbal however got a copy of the said lecture in 1935. Even after 25 years he did not feel need of any significant change in the lecture; however he added the following note in its beginning:

This lecture was delivered at Aligarh in 1911. The remark about the Qadianis in this lecture must be revised in the light of revelation of the spirit of the movement since 1911. The Qadianis still appear to be Muslims in externals. Indeed they are very particular in the matter of externals but the spirit of the movement as revealed often is wholly inimical to Islam. Outwardly they look Muslims and [are] anxious to look so; but inwardly their

whole mentality is Magian. It is probable that eventually the movement will end in Bahaism from which it originally appears to have received inspiration.

Md. Iqbal
21st Oct, 1935

The backdrop of this note is that in the said lecture Allama observed about Qadianis:

“In the Punjab the essentially Muslim type of character has found a powerful expression in so-called Qadiani sect.”

But three or four years before his demise, Iqbal wrote a detailed article headlined “Qadianis and Orthodox Muslims”, in which he expressed his viewpoint on the issue of Qadianism in a very precise manner, which nullified his earlier opinions thereon. Criticising it, the *Light* weekly wrote that there is inconsistency in the opinions of Iqbal. When, a few days later, a correspondent mentioned the allegation of *Light* to Allama Iqbal, he said:

“As far as I remember, the lecture was delivered in 1911, or perhaps earlier. I have no hesitation in admitting that about a quarter of a century ago, I had hopes of good results following from this movement. But the real content and spirit of religious movement does not reveal itself in a day. It takes decades to unfold itself. The internal quarrel between the two sections of the movement is evidence of the fact that even those, who were in personal contact with the founder, were not quite aware of how movement would evolve itself.

Personally, I became suspicious of the movement when the claim of a new prophethood, superior even to the Prophethood of the founder of Islam, was definitely put forward, and the Muslim world was declared *Kafir*. Later my suspicions developed into a positive revolt when I heard with my own ears an adherent of the movement mentioning the Holy Prophet of Islam in a most disparaging language. Not by their roots but by their fruits will you know them. If my present attitude is self-contradictory, then, well only a living and thinking man has the privilege of contradicting himself. Only stones do not contradict themselves, an Emerson says."

This detailed elucidation of the Aligarh lecture illustrates not only the context of the note but also its significance.

This is for the first time that the original and full text of the extinct lecture of Allama Iqbal is being published. There were many typographical errors in the available text; they have been corrected.

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The Muslim Community – a Sociological Study

In the Epic sweep of human history there is nothing more awe-inspiring, nothing more destructive of human ambition than the ruins of bygone nations, Empires and civilisations appearing and disappearing, during the painful course of human evolution, like the scenes of a rapidly vanishing dream. The forces of Nature appear to respect neither individuals nor nations; her inexorable laws continue to work as if she has a far-off purpose of her own, in no sense related to what may be the immediate interest or the ultimate destiny of man. But man is a peculiar creature. Amidst the most discouraging circumstances, his imagination, working under the control of his understanding, gives him a more perfect vision of himself and impels him to discover the means which would transform his brilliant dream of an idealised self into a living actually. An animal of inferior physical strength, unequipped with natural weapons of defence, lacking the power of nocturnal vision, keen scent or fleetness of foot, man has, in search of a freer, ampler life, always directed his indefatigable energy to discover the ways of nature, understand their working, and thus gradually to become a determining factor in his own evolution. By the great discovery of the law of Natural Selection he has succeeded in reaching a rational conception of his

own history which, before long, appeared to him to be nothing more than an inscrutable series of events dropping out, one by one, from the mysterious womb of time, without any inherent order or purpose. A still deeper insight into the meaning of this law, and the discovery by post-Darwinian thinkers, of other equally important facts of collective life are calculated to work a complete revolution in man's notions of group-life in its social, ethical, economic and political aspects. It has been brought to light by recent biological research that the individual as such is a mere abstraction, a convenient expression for facility of social reference, passing moment in the life of the group to which happens to belong. His thoughts, his aspirations, his ways of life, his entire mental and physical outfit, the very number of days which he lives, are all determined by the needs of the community of whose collective life he is only a partial expression. The interests of society as a whole are fundamentally different and even antagonistic to the interests of the individual whose activity is nothing more than an unconscious performance of a particular function which social economy has allotted to him. Society has a distinct life of its own irrespective of the life of its component units taken individually. And just as an individual organism, in a state of organic disorder, sometimes unconsciously sets up within itself, forces which tend to its health, so a social organism, under the corroding influence of destructive forces, may sometimes call into being counteracting forces—such as the appearance of an inspiring personality, the birth of a new ideal, or a universal religious reform—which tend to restore its original vitality, and finally save the organism from

structural collapse by making the inward communal self to bring into subjection all the insubordinate forces, and to throw off all that is inimical to the health of its organic unity. Society has or rather tends to have a consciousness, a will and an intellect of its own, though the stream of its mentality has no other channel through which to flow than individual minds. The expressions "Public Opinion", "National genius", or what the Germans happily phrase the "Zeitgeist" are only vague recognitions of this exceedingly important fact of social Psychology. The crowd, the mass-meeting, the corporation, the sect, and finally the deliberative assembly are the various means by which the body-social organises itself in order to secure the unity of self consciousness. It is not necessary that the social mind should be conscious of all the various ideas that are at a particular moment, working in the individual minds. The individual mind is never completely aware of its own states of Consciousness. In the case of the collective mind too many feelings, states and ideas remain below the threshold of social sensibility, only a portion of the universal mental life crossing the border, and getting into the clear daylight of social consciousness. This economical arrangement saves from unnecessary expenditure, a great quantity of the energy of the central organs which would otherwise be fruitlessly spent on details. It is, therefore, clear that society has a life-stream of its own. The idea that it is merely the sum of its existing individuals is essentially wrong, and consequently all projects of social and political reform proceed on this assumption must undergo careful re-examination. Society is much more than its existing individuals; it is

in its nature infinite; it includes within its contents the innumerable unborn generations which, though they ever lie beyond the limits of immediate social vision, must be considered as the most important portion of a living community. Recent biological research has revealed that in the successful group-life it is the future which must always control the present; to the species taken as whole its unborn members are perhaps more real than its existing members whose immediate interests are subordinated and even sacrificed to the future interests of that unborn infinity which slowly discloses itself from generation to generation. To this remarkable revelation of biological truth the social and political reformer cannot afford to remain indifferent. Now it is from this standpoint—from the standpoint of the future that I wish to test the worth of our present social activity. There is strictly speaking only one all important problem before a community—call it whatever you like, Social, Economic or Political—and that is the problem of a continuous national life. Extinction is as abhorrent to a race as to an individual. The worth of all the various activities of a community—intellectual or otherwise—ought always to be determined in reference to this ultimate purpose. We must criticise our values, perhaps transvaluate them; and, if necessary, create new worths; since the immortality of a people, as Nietzsche has so happily put, depends upon the incessant creation of worths. Things certainly bear the stamp of divine manufacture, but their meaning is through and through human. Before, however, I proceed to this examination I wish to consider a few preliminary points, the consideration of which, to my mind, is essential to arriving at any

definite conclusion concerning the Muslim Community. These points are:

- (1) The general structure of the Muslim Community.
- (2) The uniformity of Muslim culture.
- (3) The type of character essential to a continuous National life of the Muslim Community.

I shall take these points in order."

(1) The essential difference between the Muslim Community and other Communities of the world consists in our peculiar conception of nationality. It is not the unity of language or country or the identity of economic interest that constitutes the basic principle of our nationality. It is because we all believe in a certain view of the universe and participate in the same historical tradition that we are members of the society founded by the Prophet of Islam. Islam abhors all material limitations, and bases its nationality on a purely abstract idea, objectified in a potentially expansive group of concrete personalities. It is not dependent for its life-principle on the character and genuins of a particular people, in its essence it is non-temporal, non-spatial.

The Arab Race the original creation of Islam, was certainly a great factor in its political expansion, but the enormous wealth of literature & thought—manifestations of the higher life of the spirit—has been the work of chiefly non-arabian races. It seems as if the birth of Islam was only a momentary flash of divine consciousness in the life-history of the Arab race; the working of its spiritual potentialities was due

to the genius of peoples other than the Arabs. The essence of Islam, then, being purely ideal, it could not accept any objective principle—such as country—as a principle of nationality. The territorial conception of nationality, which has been so much exaggerated in modern times bears within itself the germs of its own destruction. The idea of modern nationalism has certainly functioned usefully in forming smaller political units, and creating a healthy rivalry among them which has contributed so much to the variety of modern civilisation. But the idea is apt to be exaggerated, it has created a great deal of misunderstanding of international motives; it has opened up a vast field for diplomatic intrigue, and tends to ignore the broad human element in art and literature by emphasising the peculiar traits and characteristics of particular peoples. To my mind the feeling of patriotism which the national idea evokes is a kind of derfication of a material object, diametrically opposed to the essence of Islam which appeared as a protest against all the subtle and coarse forms of idolatory. I do not, however, mean to condemn the feeling of Patriotism. Peoples whose solidarity depends on a territorial basis are perfectly justified in that feeling. But I certainly do mean to attack the conduct of those who while they recognised the great value of patriotic feeling in the formation of a peoples' character. Yet condemn our Asabiyyat which they miscall fanaticism. We are as much justified in our Asabiyyat as they are in their Protriotism. For what is Asabiyyat? Nothing but the principle of individuation working in the case of a group. All forms of life are more or less fanatical and ought to be so if they care

for their individual or collective life. And as a matter of fact all nations are fanatical. Criticise a French man's religion; you do not very much rouse his feelings; since your criticism does not touch the life-principle of his nationality. But criticise his civilisation, his country, or the corporate behaviour of his nation in any sphere of political activity and you will bring out his inmate fanaticism. The reason is that his nationality does not depend on his religious belief; it has a geographical basis—his country. His Asabiyyat is then justly roused when you criticise the locality—which he has idealised as the essential principle of his nationality. Our position, however, is essentially different. With us nationality is a pure idea; it has no objective basis. Our only rallying-point, as a people is a kind of purely subjective agreement in a certain view of the world. If then our asabiyyat is roused when our religion is criticised, I think we are as much justified in it as a French man is when his country is denounced. The feeling in each case is the same though associated with different objects. Asabiyyat is patriotism for religion; Patriotism Asabiyyat for country. Asabiyyat simply means a strong feeling for one's own nationality and does not necessarily imply any feeling of hatred against other nationalities. During my stay in England I found that whenever I described any peculiarly eastern custom or mode of thought to an English lady or gentlemen, I, almost invariably, invoked the remark—"how funny"—as if any non-English mode of thought was absolutely inconceivable. I have the highest admiration for this attitude; it does not indicate any want of imagination; the country of Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson and Swinburne

cannot be wholly unimaginative; on the other hand it indicates how deeply England's mode of thought and life, her institutions, her manners and customs are rooted in the mind of her people.

The religious idea, then, without any theological centralisation which would unnecessarily limit the liberty of the individual, determines the ultimate structure of the Muslim Community. In the case of no (?) community the words of Augustus Comte are so completely true as in the case of our own. "Since Religion", says he, "embraces all our existence, its history must be an epitome of the whole history of our development." It may, however, be asked that if mere belief in certain prepositions of a Metaphysical import is the only thing that ultimately determines the structure of the Muslim Community, is it not an extremely unsafe basis especially before the advance of modern knowledge, with its habits of Rationalism and criticism? This is what the French Orientalist Renan thought; and entertained a veiled hope that Islam would one day "lose the high intellectual and moral direction of an important part of the universe." Nations, the basic principle of whose collective life is territorial, need not be afraid of Rationalism, to us it is a dangerous foe, since it aims at the very principle which gives us a communal-life, and alone makes our collective existence intelligible. Rationalism is essentially analysis and consequently threatens to disintegrate the communal synthesis achieved by the force of the religious idea. It is undoubtedly true that we can meet Rationalism on its own ground. But the point which I wish to impress on you is that the dogma i.e. the point of universal agreement on which our

communal solidarity depends, has essentially a national rather than intellectual significance for us. To try to convert religion into a system of speculative knowledge is, in my opinion, absolutely useless, and even absurd, since the object of religion is not thinking about life, its main purpose is to build up a coherent social whole for the gradual elevation of life. Religion is itself a Metaphysics, in so far as it calls up into being a new universe with a view to suggest a new type of character tending to universalise itself in proportion to the force of the personality in which it originally embodies itself. The point that I have tried to bring out in the above remarks is that Islam has a far deeper significance for us than merely religious; it has a peculiarly national meaning, so that our communal life is unthinkable without a firm grasp of the Islamic Principle. The idea of Islam is, so to speak, our eternal home or country wherein we live, move and have our being. To us it is above everything else, as England is above all to the Englishman and "Deutschland uber alles" to the German. The moment our grasp of the Islamic Principle is loosened the solidarity of our community is gone.

(2) Coming now to the second point. The uniformity of Muslim Culture. The unity of religious belief on which our communal life depends, is supplemented by the uniformity of Muslim Culture. Mere belief in the Islamic principle, though exceedingly important, is not sufficient. In order to participate in the life of the communal self the individual mind must undergo a complete transformation, and this transformation is secured, externally by the institutions of Islam, and internally

by that uniform culture which the intellectual energy of our forefathers has produced. The more you reflect on the history of the Muslim Community the more wonderful does it appear from the day of its foundation up to the beginning of the 16th Century almost a thousand years this energetic race was busy in the all-absorbing occupation of political expansion. Yet in this storm of continuous activity the Muslim world found time to unearth the treasures of ancient science, to make material additions to them, to build a literature of unique character, and above all to develop a comprehensive system of law, probably the most valuable legacy that Muslim civilization has left us. Just as the Muslim Community does not recognize any ethnological differences, and aims at the subsumption of all races under the universal idea of humanity, so our culture is relatively universal, and is not indebted, for its life and growth to the genuins of one particular people. Persia is perhaps the principal factor in the making of this culture. If you ask me what is the most important event in the history of Islam, I shall immediately answer—the conquest of Persia. The battle of Nehawand gave to the Arabs not only a beautiful country, but also an ancient people who could construct a new civilisation out of the Semitic and the Aryan material. Our Muslim civilisation is a product of the cross fertilisation of the Semitic and the Aryan ideas. It inherits the softness and refinement of its Aryan mother and the sterling character of its Semitic father. The conquest of Persia gave to the Musalmans what the Conquest of Greece gave to the Romans, but for Persia our culture would have been absolutely onesided. And the people whose contact transformed

the Arabs and the Mughals are not intellectually dead. Persia, whose existence as an independent Political unit is threatened by the aggressive ambition of Russia is still a real centre of Muslim culture: and I can only hope that she still continues to occupy the position that she has always occupied in the Muslim world. To the Royal family of Persia the loss of Persia's political independence would mean only a territorial loss, to the Muslim culture such an event would be a blow much more serious than the Tartar invasion of the 10th Century. But perhaps I am drifting into politics which it is not my present object to discuss, all that I mean to establish is that in order to become a living member of the Muslim Community the individual besides an unconditional belief in the religious principle, must thoroughly assimilate the culture of Islam. The object of this assimilation is to create a uniform mental outlook, a peculiar way of looking at the world, a definite standpoint from which to judge the value of things which sharply defines our community, and transforms it into a corporate individual giving it a definite purpose and ideal of its own.

(3) The third point need not detain us long. The above remarks indicate the principal features of an essentially Muslim type of character. The various types of character, however, that become popular in a community do not appear haphazard. Modern Sociology teaches us that the moral experience of nations obeys certain definite laws. In primitive societies where the struggle for existence is extremely keen and draws more upon man's physical rather than intellectual qualities it is the valiant man who becomes an object of universal admiration and imitation. When,

however, the struggle relaxes and the peril is over, the valorous type is displaced, though not all-together, by what Giddings calls the convivial type, which takes a due share in all the pleasures of life, and combines in itself the virtues of liberality, generosity and good fellowship. But these two types of character have a tendency to become reckless, and by way of reaction against them appears the third great type which holds up the ideal of self-control, and is dominated by a more serious view of life. In so far as the evolution of the Muslim Community in India is concerned Temur represented the first type, Babar combined the first and the second, Jahangir embodies pre-eminently the second, while the third type was foreshadowed in Alamgir whose life and activity forms, in my opinion, the starting point in the growth of Muslim Nationality in India. To those whose knowledge of Alamgir is derived from the western interpreters of Indian History, the name of Alamgir is associated with all sorts of cruelty, intolerance, treachery and political intrigue. I shall be drifting away from the main point of this lecture if I undertake to show, by a right interpretation of contemporary history, the legitimacy of motive that guided Alamgir's political life. A critical study of his life and times has convinced me that the charges brought against him are based on a misinterpretation of contemporary facts, and a complete misunderstanding of the nature of social and political forces which were then working in the Muslim State. To me the ideal of character, foreshadowed by Alamgir is essentially the Muslim type of character, and it must be the object of all our education to develop that type. It is our aim to secure

a continuous life of the community we must produce a type of character which at all costs, holds fast to its own, and while it readily assimilates all that is good in other types, it carefully excludes from its life all that is hostile to its cherished traditions and institutions. A careful observation of the Muslim Community in India reveals the point on which the various lines of moral experience of the community are now tending to converge. In the Punjab the essentially Muslim type of character has found a powerful expression in the so-called Qadiani-sect; while in the United Provinces, owing to a slightly different intellectual environment, the need of such a type of character is loudly proclaimed by a great poetic voice. In his lighthearted humour Maulana Akbar of Allahabad, aptly called the tongue of the times, conceals a keen perception of the nature of the forces that are at present working in the Muslim Community. Do not be misled by the half-serious tone of his utterances; he keeps his tears veiled in youthful laughter, and will not admit you into his workshop until you come with a keener glance to examine his wares. So deeply related are the currents of thought and emotion in a homogeneous community that if one portion reveals a certain organic craving the material to satisfy that craving is almost simultaneously produced by the other.

Let me now proceed a step further. In this foregoing discussion I have tried to establish three propositions:

1. That the religious idea constitutes the life-principle of the Muslim Community. In order to maintain the health and vigour of such a community

the development of all dissenting forces in it must be carefully watched and a rapid influx of foreign elements must be checked or permitted to enter into the social fabric very slowly, so that it may not bring on a collapse by making too great a demand on the assimilation powers of the social organism.

2. Secondly: the mental outfit of the individual belonging to the Muslim community must be mainly formed out of the material which the intellectual energy of his forefathers has produced, so that he may be made to feel the continuity of the present with the past and the future.

3. Thirdly: that he must possess a particular type of character which I have described as the Muslim type.

It is my object now to examine the value of the work that we have done in the various spheres of activity. Now a thoroughgoing criticism of the work of the Muslim world in the sphere of Politics, Religion, Literature and thought, Education, Journalism, Industry, Trade and Commerce will require several volumes. The events which are now happening in the Muslim World are extremely significant and a searching examination of them would be exceedingly instructive, but the task is enormous, and I confess it is beyond my power to undertake it. I shall, therefore, have to confine my observations to the work that we have done in India, and here too I do not pretend to give you any exhaustive treatment of the various problems now confronting us. I shall consider only two points—Education and the Improvement of the general condition of the masses.

During the last fifty years or so, the work of Education has absorbed almost all our energies. It is not improper to ask whether we have been following any definite educational ideal, or only working for immediate ends without giving a thought to the future. What kind of men have we turned out? And is the quality of the output calculated to secure a continuous life of such a peculiarly constructed community as our own? The answer to these questions has been already indicated. The students of Psychology among you know very well that the personal identity of the individual mind depends upon the orderly succession of its mental states. When the continuity of the stream of individual consciousness is disturbed there results psychical ill health which may, in course of time, lead on to a final dissolution of vital forces. The same is the case with the life of the social mind whose continuity is dependent on the orderly transmission of its collective experience from generation to generation. The objects of education is to secure this orderly transmission and thus to give a unity of self-consciousness or personal identity to the social mind. It is a deliberate effort to bring about an organic relation between the individual and the body-politic to which he belongs. The various portions of the collective tradition so transmitted by education, permeate the entire social mind, and become objects of clear consciousness in the minds of a few individuals only whose life and thought become specialised for the various purposes of the community. The legal, historical and literary traditions of a community for instances, are definitely present to the consciousness of its lawyers, historians and literary writers, though the

community as a whole is only vaguely conscious of them. Now I wish you to look at and judge the value of our educational achievement from this standpoint. In the modern Muslim Youngman we have produced a specimen of character whose intellectual life has absolutely no background of Muslim culture without which, in my opinion he is only half a muslim or even less than that provided his purely secular education has left his religious belief unshaken. He has been allowed, I am afraid, to assimilate western habits of thought to an alarming extent, a constant study of western literature, to the entire neglect of the collective experience of his own community, has, I must frankly say, thoroughly demuslimised his mental life. No community, I say without any fear of contradiction, has produced so very noble types of character as our own: yet our youngman who is deploarably ignorant of the life-history of his own community has to go to the great personalities of western history for a admiration and guidance. Intellectually he is a slave to the west, and consequently his soul is lacking in that healthy egoism which comes from a study of ones own history and classics. In our educational enterprise we have hardly realised the truth, which experience is now forcing upon us, that an undivided devotion to an alien culture is a kind of imperceptible conversion to that culture, a conversion which may involve much more serious consequences than conversion to a new religion. No Muslim writer has expressed this truth more pointedly than the poet Akhbar who, after surveying the present intellectual life of the Muslim Youngman, cries out in despair:

شیخ مرحوم کا قول اب مجھے یاد آتا ہے^۱
دل بدل جائیں گے تعلیم بدل جانے سے

We now see that the fears of the “شیخ مرحوم”—the representative of the essentially Muslim culture who waged a bitter controversy with the late Sir Sayyed Ahmed Khan on the question of Western Education—were not quite groundless. Need I say that our educational product is a standing testimony to the grain of truth contained in the Shaikh Marhum’s contention? Gentlemen, I hope you will excuse me for these straightforward remarks. Having been in close touch with the student-life of to-day for the last ten or twelve years, and teaching a subject closely related to religion, I think I have got some claim to be heard on this point. It has been my painful experience that the Muslim Student, ignorant of the social, ethical and political ideals that have dominated the mind of his community, is spiritually dead; and that if the present state of affairs is permitted to continue for another twenty years the Muslim spirit which is now kept alive by a few representatives of the old Muslim culture, will entirely disappear from the life of our community. Those who laid it down as a fundamental principle that the education of the Muslim child must begin with the study of the Qur’an—no matter whether he understands it or not—were certainly much more sensible of the nature of our community than we claim to be. Economic considerations alone ought not to determine our activity as a people, the preservation of the unity of the community, the continuous national life is a far higher ideal than the service of merely immediate ends. To me a Muslim of scanty

means who possesses a really Muslim character is a much more valuable national asset than a high-salaried, free-thinking graduate with whom Islam, far from being a working principle of life, is merely a convenient policy in order to secure a greater share in the leaves and fishes of the country. These remarks need not lead you to think that I mean to condemn western culture. Every student of Muslim history must recognize that it was the west which originally shaped the course of our intellectual activity. In the sphere of pure thought we are still perhaps more Greek than Arab or Persian; Yet nobody can deny that we possess a unique culture of our own, which no modern Muslim system of education can afford to ignore without running the risk of denationalizing those good it aims at securing. It is indeed a happy sign that the idea of a Muslim University has dawned upon us. Considering the nature of our community the necessity of such an institution cannot be doubted, provided it is conducted on strictly Islamic lines. No community can afford to break entirely with its past and it is more emphatically true in the case of our community whose collective tradition alone constitutes the principle of its vitality. The Muslim must of course keep pace with the progress of modern ideas; but his culture must, in the main, remain Muslim in character and it is clear that such a thing cannot be attained without a teaching university of our own. If you produce youngmen the groundwork of whose culture is not Muslim, you will not be bring up a Muslim community, you will be creating a totally new community which having no strong principle of cohesion may, at any time lose its

individuality in the individuality of any of the surrounding communities that may happen to possess a greater vitality than itself. But there is, perhaps, a still more important reason for the necessity of a Muslim University in India. You know that the ethical training of the masses of our community is principally in the hands of a very inefficient class of Moulvies or public preachers the range of whose knowledge of Muslim History and Literature is extremely limited. A modern public teacher of morality and religion must be familiar with the great truths of History, Economics and Sociology besides being thoroughly conversant with the literature and thought of his own community. Such public teachers are the great need of the times. The Nadwa, the Aligarh College, the theological Seminary of Deoband and other institutions of a similar type, working independently of one another, cannot meet this pressing demand. All these scattered educational forces should be organized into a central institution of a large purpose which may afford opportunities not only for the development of special abilities, but may also create the necessary type of culture for the modern Indian Muslim. A purely western ideal of education will be dangerous to the life of our community if it is to continue in an essentially Muslim community. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to construct a fresh educational ideal in which the elements of Muslim culture must find a prominent place, and past and the present come into a happy union. The construction of such an ideal is not an easy task; it requires a large imagination, a keen perception of the tendencies of modern times,

and a complete grasp of the meaning of Muslim History and religion.

Before leaving this point I think I ought to say a few words on the education of the Muslim woman. This is not a place to discuss the ideal of womanhood in Islam. I must however, frankly admit that I am not an advocate of absolute equality between man and woman. It appears that Nature has allotted different functions to them, and a right performance of these functions is equally indispensable for the health and prosperity of the human family. The so called "emancipation of the western woman" necessitated by western individualism, and the peculiar economic situation produced by an unhealthy competition, is an experiment, in my opinion, likely to fail, not without doing incalculable harm, and creating extremely intricate social problems. Nor is the higher education of women likely to lead to any desirable consequences in so far, at least, as the birth rate of a community is concerned. Experience has already shown that the economic emancipation of women in the west has not, as was expected, materially extended the production of wealth. On the other hand it has a tendency to break up the Psycial life of Society. Now I am ready to recognize that the evolution of a society by resident forces alone is an impossibility in modern times. The almost total annihilation of space and time has produced a close contact among the various communities of the world, a contact which is likely to affect the natural orbit of some and to prove disastrous to others. What the larger economic, social and political forces that are now working in the world will bring about, nobody

can foretell; but we must remember that while it is advisable, and even necessary for a healthy social change, to assimilate the elements of an alien culture, a hasty injudicious jump to alien institutions may lead to most abrupt structural disturbances in the body-social. There is an element of Universality in the culture of a people; their social and political institutions on the other hand, are more individual. They are determined by their peculiar tradition and life-history, and cannot be easily adopted by a community having a different tradition and life-history. Considering, then the peculiar nature of our community, the teaching of Islam, and the revelations of Physiology, and Biology on the subject, it is clear that the Muslim women should continue to occupy the position in society which Islam has allotted to her. And the position which has been allotted to her must determine the nature of her education. I have tried to show above that the solidarity of our community rests on our hold on the religion and culture of Islam. The woman is the principal depository of the religious idea. In the interests of a continuous national life, therefore, it is extremely necessary to give her, in the first place, a sound religious education. That must, however, be supplemented by a general knowledge of Muslim-History, Domestic economy, and Hygiene. This will enable her to give a degree of intellectual companionship to her husband, and successfully to do the duties of motherhood which, in my opinion, is the principal, function of the woman. All subjects which have a tendency to de-womanise and to de-muslamise her must be carefully excluded from her education. But our educationists are still groping in the dark.

They have not yet been able to prescribe a definite course of study for our girls; and some of them are, unfortunately, too much dazzled by the glamour of western ideals to realize the difference between Islam which constructs nationality out of a purely abstract idea, i.e., religion, and westernism which builds nationality on an objective basis i.e. country.

I shall now proceed to offer a few remarks on the improvement of the general condition of the masses of our community. And in this connection the first point of importance is the economic condition of the average Muslim. I am sure nobody will deny that the economic condition of the average Muslim is extremely deplorable. His small wage, dirty house and under-fed children are a matter of common observation in the towns where the population is mostly Muslim. Pass through a Muslim street in Lahore; what do you find: An old silent gloomy street whose mournful quiet is relieved by the shrieks of ill-clad bony children, or by the subdued entreaties of an old woman in Pardah spreading out her skinny hand for alms. This is not all. Inside these unhappy dwelling there are hundreds of men and women whose fathers have seen better days, but who are now compelled to starve without ever opening their lips for appeals (for) charity. It is really this poverty of the lower strata of our community and not the Pardah system, as our young protagonists of social reform some times contend, that is re-acting on the general physique of our community. Besides this class there is the absolutely incapable who bring into the world children as incapable as himself, and by surrendering himself to laziness and crime spreads the contagion of

these vices to others. Have we ever given a thought to these aspects of the social problem? Have we ever realized that the duty of our Anjumans and Leagues is to work for the elevation of the masses and not to push up the individuals? The most important problem before the Muslim public worker is how to improve the economic conditions of his community. It is his duty to make a careful study of the general economic situation in India and the causes which have brought it about. How much of this situation is due to the larger economic forces that are working in the modern world, how much to the historical antecedents, customs, prejudices and ethical shortcomings of the people of this land, how much if at all, to the policy of the Government these are the questions which, in preference to other questions, must occupy his brains. The problem will, of course, have to be approached in a broad impartial non-sectarian spirit; since the economic forces affect all communities alike. The ever-increasing land-revenue, the importation of foreign drink into country, the rise of prices, whether it is due to a wrong currency policy of the establishment or free-trade between an agricultural country and a manufacturing country, or to any other cause—these things affect the economic condition of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Parsees all alike, and loudly proclaim that the public workers of all the various communities can, at least, meet on the common ground of economic discussion. The Muslim public worker, however has hitherto concentrated almost all his energies on the point of securing our due share in Government Service. The effort is certainly laudable, and he must continue to work

untill we have achieved our object. But he must remember that Government-service, as a field for the production of wealth, is extremely limited. It offers prospects of economic elvation only to a few individuals; the general health of a community depends largely on its economic independence. There is no doubt that a few individuals in the higher branches of Government-service give a tone of honour and self-respect to the whole community; but it is equally true that there are other spheres of economic activity which are equally important and more profitable. The process of change and adjustment to an economic ideal is certainly painful to a people whose tradition have been in the main, military, yet, in view of the change that is coming over the communities of Asia, principally through the economic energy of western nations, the ordeal must be gone through besides working for the removal of economic disabilities, if any, we must have a system of technical education which is, in my opinion, even more important, than higher education. The former touches the general economic condition of the masses which form the backbone of a community, the latter only a few individuals who happen to possess more than average intellectual energy. The charity of the wealthier classes among us must be so organised as to afford opportunities of a cheep technical education to the children of the community. But industrial and commercial training alone is not sufficient. In economic competition the ethical factor plays an equally important part. The virtues of thrift, mutual trust, honesty, punctuality and co-operation are as much valuable economic assets as Professional skill.

How many economic under-takings have failed in India through want of mutual trust and a proper spirit of co-operation. If we want to turn out good working men, good shopkeepers, good artisans and above all good citizens, we must first make them good Muslims.

